

English Abstracts

A Healthful Attachment – Psycho-educational Riding for Children with Mentally Ill Parents

Regina Schnorbach

Children of parents with mental health problems are considered to be a high-risk group for the development of mental health problems. They can suffer from emotional and social strains which adversely affect their development. Therefore, they need specific support which takes into account their special circumstances and helps them cope with their lives. One possible intervention, the psycho-educational use of horses, is to be presented here. Especially for people with difficult experiences in relation to attachments, contact with a horse – carefully facilitated by a paedagogue – can be healing. This is because horses are herd animals,

and include humans in their highly developed social behaviour. At the same time, the horse constitutes a new point of contact for many children and thus offers alternative possibilities for experience. It is also possible to use horses to open up new perspectives for the affected parent, and even include parent and child together in the activities on and with the horse.

Keywords: Children, parents with mental health problems, high-risk group, healing experience of attachment, psycho-educational riding, therapeutic riding

Therapeutic Riding for Children with Congenital Heart Disease

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Many children with congenital heart disease do not benefit from the experience of regular physical exercise due to overprotective parents and uncertainty on the part of physicians and trainers about the childrens' physical capacity. This can result in deficits in motor development, body awareness, and coordination, as well as in anxiety, fearfulness about movement, lack of confidence, poor social skills and a restricted range of activities (Sticker 2004; Bjarnason-Wehrens et al. 2007).

Therapeutic riding, especially psycho-educational riding/vaulting, but also hippotherapy and riding as a sport for people with disabilities, affect these childrens' development most positively.

Keywords: Psycho-educational riding/vaulting, hippotherapy, equestrian sports for handicapped people, vaulting, riding, therapeutic riding, equine assisted therapy, physical activity and congenital heart disease, coordination, physical capacity of children with congenital heart disease